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Diana T Fritz 05/24/2007 04:57:18 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

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SIPDIS
TELEGRAM

March 02, 2003

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 1032 - UNKNOWN)
TAGS: PREL, PGOV
Captions: None
Subject: DESPITE WIDESPREAD PUBLIC OPPOSITION TO IRAQ
WAR, UAE "STREET" QUIET SO FAR
Ref: None

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 01032

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: POL
INFO: DCM P/M ECON RSO AMB

DISSEMINATION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:MMWAHBA
DRAFTED: POL:STWILLIAMS
CLEARED: DCM:RAALBRIGHT

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8647
INFO RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 001032

SIPDIS

FOR NEA/ARP AND NEA/NGA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/01/13
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: DESPITE WIDESPREAD PUBLIC OPPOSITION
TO IRAQ WAR, UAE "STREET" QUIET SO FAR

[1](#)1. (U) Classified by DCM Richard A. Albright,
for Reasons 1.5 (B) and (D).

[1](#)2. (C) Despite widespread public opposition to a
U.S.-led war on Iraq, the UAE "street" has been
quiet thus far. Other than a few very well-
organized and very small demonstrations, there have
been no other public gatherings. This is in
contrast to the onset of the Al-Aqsa intifada in
October 2000 and the Israeli incursion into Jenin in
April 2002, both of which witnessed large public,
but very peaceful demonstrations. In a recent
meeting with the Ambassador, State Security Director
and Presidential son Shaykh Hazza bin Zayid Al-
Nahyan predicted that at most there would be a few

peaceful demonstrations should it come to war. He added that the authorities had not received any requests for demonstrations, noting that the security services had learned a lot from the publicly sanctioned demonstrations during the Palestinian Al-Aqsa intifada. Hazza explained that the services had placed agents in the demonstrations to pinpoint potential troublemakers.

¶3. (SBU) During a visit to the American University of Sharjah on February 23 to open an exhibition of Ground Zero photographs, the Ambassador was greeted by a small, extremely peaceful, group of student protestors (mostly Arab expats) carrying gruesome pictures of maimed Palestinian and Iraqi civilians as well as placards condemning war on Iraq. The Ambassador stopped to chat with these students as well as with another small group of Emirati women protestors toting candles. The head of the student council delivered remarks at the exhibition's opening ceremony critical of U.S. policy towards Iraq but also very critical of terrorism, Usama Bin Laden and Al-Qaida.

¶4. (SBU) APAO and Regional Information Resources Officer found that it was "business as usual" during a visit to UAE University in Al-Ain. Several U.S. citizens working at the university commented that they had personally neither experienced nor witnessed an increase in anti-U.S. sentiments among the student population. In fact, the resident Americans noted that the university administration is taking steps to circumvent anti-Americanism, going so far as monitoring and, if necessary, censoring presentations and speeches of foreign visitors for any anti-U.S. rhetoric.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: We believe there will be some public demonstrations should the U.S. opt for war, particularly without UN cover, but they will probably remain non-violent. Our non-official contacts are almost overwhelmingly opposed to a military option. As elsewhere in the region, people are careful to note their support for the Iraqi people but their absolute disgust with Saddam's regime.

WAHBA